

REMARKS

In the present Amendment, claim 1 is amended to depend from claim 3. Claim 3 is amended to incorporate the subject matter of claims 4 and 5. Accordingly, claims 4 and 5 are canceled. Claim 6 is amended to depend from claim 3.

No new matter has been added, and entry of the Amendment is respectfully requested. Upon entry of the Amendment, claims 1-3, 6 and 7 will be pending.

Rejection of claim 5 under 35 U.S.C. § 112

Referring to page 2 of the Office Action, claim 5 was rejected as allegedly being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

Applicants traverse and respectfully request the Examiner to reconsider in view of the amendments to the claims and the following remarks. In particular, Applicants submit that the present claims are clear and definite when read in light of the specification. See, e.g., Fig. 2 and the corresponding disclosure in the specification.

In view of the above, reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully submitted to be proper.

Rejection of claims 1-4 and 7 under 35 U.S.C. § 102

On page 3 of the Office Action, claims 1-4 and 7 were rejected as allegedly being anticipated by Japanese Patent Application No. 11-324129 (the '129 reference).

Applicants respectfully traverse.

Without acquiescence as to the merits of the rejection, claim 3 is amended herein, inter alia, to incorporate the subject matter of claim 5, which was not subject to the present rejection, and independent claim 1 is amended herein to depend from claim 3. Claims 2 and 7 also depend from claim 3.

Applicants also point out that the differences between the present claims and the '129 reference are discussed in the originally filed specification in the last paragraph of page 1 to the beginning of page 2.

Withdrawal of the present rejection is respectfully submitted to be proper.

***Rejection of claims 3-6 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) based on Saldana &
Rejection of claim 6 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)***

On pages 4-5 of the Office Action, claims 3-6 were rejected as allegedly being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 7,127,862 (Saldana), and alternatively claim 6 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) based on Saldana.

The Examiner cites Figs. 16 and 19-23 of Saldana as allegedly disclosing a joint structure according to claims 3-6.

Applicants traverse and respectfully request the Examiner to reconsider in view of the amendments to the claims and the following remarks.

The present claims are patentable over Saldana *at least* because the present claims recite that a common reinforcing member is used both in the beam-side joint and the column-side joint. Thus, one skilled in the art would readily appreciate that, per the presently claimed invention, the number of kinds of the H section steels to be used can be reduced, and that construction costs can also be reduced. Furthermore, the number of kinds of the reinforcing member (30) to be used

can be reduced, and the construction costs can likewise also be reduced. Applicants submit that Saldana fails to disclose or suggest the same or a similar structure.

In view of the above, reconsideration and withdrawal of the § 102(e) rejection of claims 3-6 and the § 103 rejection based on Saldana are respectfully submitted to be proper.

In view of the above, reconsideration and allowance of this application are now believed to be in order, and such actions are hereby solicited.

If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned at the local, Washington, D.C., telephone number listed below.

The USPTO is directed and authorized to charge all required fees, except for the Issue Fee and the Publication Fee, to Deposit Account No. 19-4880. Please also credit any overpayments to said Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,

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